



Cooperation between the Public and Private sectors helps to maintain an Aruban tradition

PALM BEACH – As Aruba progresses forward in establishing top quality resorts and fine-tuning its tourism product, it has kept in mind some of the elements that are needed to retain the character and essence of the island. In this, a cooperative effort by the Government of Aruba, the Marriott Vacation Club International (MVCI) and The Hadicurari Fisheries Center Foundation has resulted in the preservation of a “slice of traditional Aruban life.” On Friday evening, before employees of MVCI, government dignitaries and the many fisherman that earn their livelihood from the sea, the representatives of these three groups jointly broke that first bit of ground that will mark the beginning of an ambitious project that will be the New Hadicurari Fisheries Center.

Two years of negotiations and planning resulted in the signing of an agreement between all the parties involved last year, thus clearing the way for the center that is expected to be completed by the end of this year, and the new pier that should see completion in March of 2007. A number of government agencies cooperated in the planning of the project and execution of the agreement including The Department of Agriculture, Husbandry and Fisheries (LVV0, Department of Public Works, (Dow), Department of Infrastructure Planning (DIP), Land Measurement Office (Kadaster), Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Infrastructure. The Minister of Labor, Culture and Sports, the Honorable Ramon Lee, represented the Government during the groundbreaking ceremony, Andy Rasmijn the Hadicurari Fisheries Center and James Shonkwiler, Vice President of Asset Management had his hand on the shovel on behalf of MVCI. It is the feeling of all parties involved that the new facility will best meet the needs of all the fisherman, who will continue to maintain their access to this area, as well as providing a more pleasing and harmonious design with the environment and gaining a renovated beach area with the “benefits of environmental protections incorporated into the plan.”

“The groundbreaking represents great progress forward. The integrated approach, linking various aspects and entities into one solution package was a lengthy process, but it is one that I believe will yield the greatest benefits for all involved for the long term,” was the comment Byron Boekhoudt of Marine Biologist and Policy Advisor to the Ministry of Culture. “This project sets the standard on how traditional cultural resources can complement Aruba’s tourism industry and resorts.”

The new facility will be substantially larger; a two-story structure that will include office space, washrooms, lockers for the fishermen, plus a restaurant, bar and outdoor dining with an enlarged parking area. The existing pier will eventually be dismantled and a new structure consisting of a wharf and breakwater that is more environmentally conscious will be constructed in a location further south of what now stands. The Marriott Vacation Club International has committed to the funding of the entire project. Jim Shonk Wiler of MVCI stated, “The project is in line with our “Spirit to Serve” attitude in being very much a contributing member of the community in which MVCI is a part. MVCI seeks to build long-lasting relationships, and we display it daily in our actions with our guests and owners, as well as in our interactions with the community.

After the official groundbreaking the evening finished at the Moomba Beach Bar and Restaurant with fisherman, government representatives and MVCI employees mixing, mingling and celebrating this great victory of the partnership of the public and private sectors of Aruba to move forward and continue to offer a superior tourism product while maintaining Aruban traditions.